



NewsRelease

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Four Ansbach food service specialists make the cut to compete at annual U.S. Army culinary arts competition

By Pfc. Sonya McNair

12th Combat Aviation Brigade Public Affairs Office

ANSBACH, Germany -- Three 12th Combat Aviation Brigade Soldiers and one U.S. Army Garrison Ansbach civilian employee will compete in the 34th annual U.S. Army Culinary Arts Competition as part of a 15-member team representing U.S. Army Europe and the Installation Management Command-Europe.

Sgt. John E. Lloyd and Spc. Julio Garcia of the 5th Battalion, 158th Aviation; Spc. Jaime Medina of the 412th Aviation Support Battalion; and Julian Gude of U.S. Army Garrison Ansbach have been chosen to compete in the event scheduled for Feb. 28 to March 13 at Fort Lee, Va.

Selection of the team members was announced recently at Spinelli Barracks in Mannheim, Germany, where the group trained for the competition.

“When we were in Mannheim it was tough, because we did not know each other and everyone had different attitudes and ideas, but day by day as we worked together we became tighter, and by the last day everything was coming out perfect,” said Medina.

During the event, team members will compete in individual and group categories. Medina, for instance, in his first visit to the event, will compete in the junior chef, culinary knowledge, student skills and nutritional hot foods challenge categories. Lloyd, who has 15 years experience and competed in the 2006 contest, is planning to compete in several categories, including hot pastries, six-plated desserts and the cold-food table event. Garcia will compete in the senior chef, ice sculpture and field cooking categories.

Lloyd said he encourages junior food service specialists to participate in competitions because it provides good experience. Medina agreed, and said that as a newcomer he hopes to bring home new skills from the event that will serve him well in his food service career.

“I am really hoping to learn new things that will help me better my skills and knowledge. There will be people there that I have never worked with that can help me (learn) a wide range of skills that will help me in the civilian world,” said Medina.

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Lloyd and Garcia said that the competition includes individual and collective competition that allows team members to draw on their strengths.

"Since we already know what we can and cannot do, everything comes together," Garcia said, "because we can direct one task to someone that we know can do it."

"We are judged individually by our skill and not against one another," said Lloyd.

Competitions at their home stations give food service specialists a chance to show off skills they may not get to use every day, and being selected to compete at Fort Lee is the icing on the cake.

"To be a cook you have to like cooking," he said. "We have Cook of the Quarter, Cook of the Year and culinary competitions [at home station]," said Garcia. "We not only show what we learn, but also the special skills that we have, and we get the opportunity to go to Fort Lee for this special event."

Competition officials say the event, which includes food service specialists from the active Army, Army Reserve and National Guard, is the largest culinary competition in the United States. Competitors are judged by standards established by the American Culinary Federation.

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Sgt. John E. Lloyd (right) and Spc. Julio Garcia of Ansbach, Germany, 12th Combat Aviation Brigade, will compete in the 34th annual U.S. Army Culinary, Arts Competition as part of the team representing U.S. Army Europe and the, Installation Management Command-Europe. (U. S. Army photo by Pfc. Sonya McNair, 12th Combat Aviation Brigade PAO)



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Spc. Jaime A. Medina from Ansbach, Germany's 12th Combat Aviation Brigade, will compete in the 34th annual U.S. Army Culinary Arts Competition as part of the team representing U.S. Army Europe and the Installation Management, Command-Europe. (U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Sonya McNair)



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Julian Gude of U.S Army Garrison Ansbach, Germany, trains at Spinelli Barracks in Mannheim for this year's U.S. Army Culinary Arts Competition at Ft. Lee, Va. Gude and three Soldiers from the 12th Combat Aviation Brigade were chosen to join the team representing U.S. Army Europe and the Installation Management Command-Europe at the competition. (Photo by Kristen Marquez, Staff Writer, Heidelberg Herald-Post)